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ABSTRACT

This publication reports on two Regional Educational Accountability Conferences on Techniques sponsored by the Cooperative Accountability Project. Accountability is described as an "emotionally-charged issue" and an "operationally demanding concept." Overviewing accountability, major speakers emphasized that accountability is a means toward efficiency in education, and necessary to provide evidence of accomplishment. Accountability focuses on successful outcomes and basically speaks to the idea of quality control. Accountability issues, roles of participants, assessment and evaluation, costing techniques, and communication and public involvement were discussed in workshop sessions that emphasized practical information and techniques. Conference summary statements indicated that accountability is here to stay; techniques have been developed, but await perfecting; and accountability at the local level may bring excitement to education. (DW)

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ACCOUNTING FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

EA 007 261

COOPERATIVE ACCOUNTABILITY PROJECT
Denver, Colorado
1975

This publication reports on two Regional Educational Accountability Conferences on Techniques sponsored in January and February 1975 by the Cooperative Accountability Project.

INTRODUCTION

CALVIN M. FRAZIER
Commissioner, Colorado State Department of Education and
Chairman, CAP Operations Board

These are the last words in this publication: "The key question is this: What will I do differently now?"

They are also, perhaps, the first words faced by any of us confronting the matter of educational accountability. For its essence is that we face up to the hard business of stating specifically what we want to achieve, of measuring how well we do it and at what cost, of revealing these measures candidly – and then, of deciding how to do better.

What will I do differently? It becomes a challenge to the best in us.

This publication reports on conferences held under the auspices of the Cooperative Accountability Project to deal with accountability techniques. A technique is merely a device through which one implements an agreed-upon goal. Thus, running through the conferences and the reporting thereon, is the larger question of whether we have advanced far enough to have a reasonable consensus on the meaning of accountability and the acceptance of certain broad goals.

Dissemination of information, of techniques, of attempts relating to accountability is one of the basic responsibilities of CAP. I find it encouraging that we can now disseminate a report indicating that we have moved a long step toward the needed consensus.

"EDUCATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY serves to explain the results that are being achieved by schools. It provides a basis for developing understanding of the relationship between quality in education and available resources in order to make educational improvements."

KEEPING THE PUBLIC INFORMED
CAP 1973

THEY CAME. . .

"Emotionally-charged issue . . . . operationally demanding concept."

This is the status of educational accountability today in the judgment of Dr. Stephen J. Knezevich, one of the principal speakers at winter of 1975 conferences on accountability called by CAP – the Cooperative Accountability Project.

In a world of acronyms, the conferences too were known by initials – REACT, or Regional Educational Accountability Conferences on Techniques.

The emphasis on techniques suggested – or at least hoped – that enough progress had been made so that the focus could shift from what accountability means to how do you do it. The CAP definition appearing at the front of this book would serve as the base of this common understanding: "Educational accountability serves to explain the results that are being achieved by schools. It provides a basis for developing understanding of the relationship between quality in education and available resources in order to make educational improvements."

The conferences to discuss the techniques of accountability were held in Tampa, Florida, January 30-31, 1975; and in Denver, Colorado, February 6-7, 1975.

WHAT IS CAP?

CAP is a seven-state project, initiated in April 1972, and financed by funds provided under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. The cooperating states are Colorado, Florida, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.

CAP's purpose is to develop comprehensive guidelines, informational publications, and model programs to assist state and local education agencies to make a meaningful accounting of their activities, both internally and externally. Colorado, through the Department of Education, is the administering state; CAP Director is Dr. Arthur R. Olson of that department.

Its informational publications have produced the comprehensive guidelines and the model programs of its charter.

WHAT WAS REACT?

The letter to keep in mind in the REACT acronym is the T – standing for techniques. The guidelines and the model programs of the CAP charter having been developed, the REACT conferences were called to study and discuss them. Those attending the conferences, in the words of one announcement, were "educational decision makers including state department of education personnel, school

district personnel, citizen members of accountability committees, and others interested in the issues of statewide accountability." In the words of another, they were being called together "for shared exploration of practical information on accountability."

WHAT DID THE CONFERENCES DO?

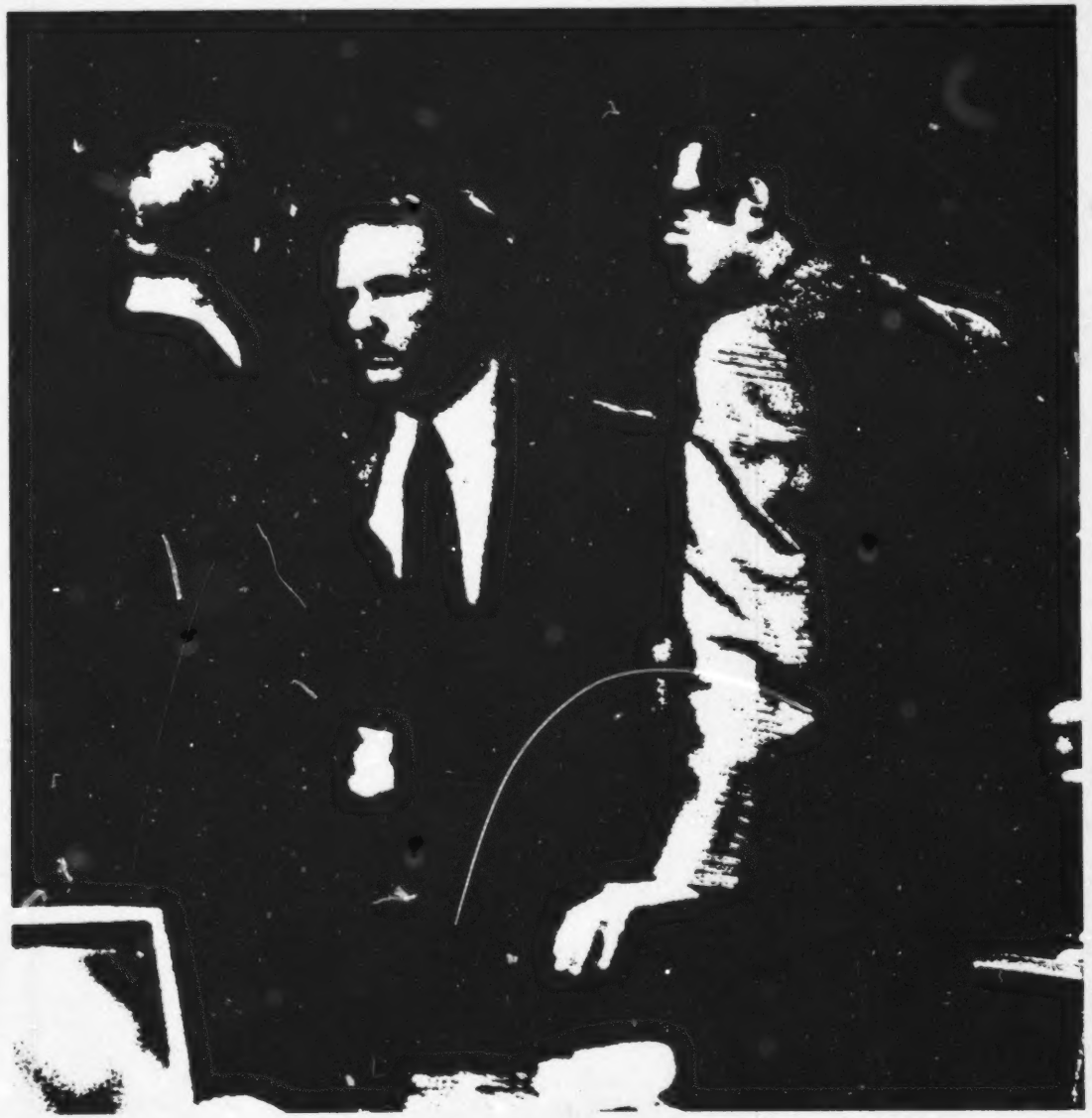
How did these two conferences on techniques – stressing shared exploration of practical information for educational decision makers – proceed?

The formats of the meetings in Tampa and in Denver were similar.

They started on the first morning with an overview of accountability today. At both meetings, the overview was given by Dr. Lesley H. Browder Jr. (Brief notes on principal speakers accompany the appropriate sections of Chapter II.)

The conferees then broke into five workshops on the following topics:

- *Accountability Issues*
- *Roles of Participants*
- *Assessment and Evaluation*
- *Costing Techniques*
- *Communication and Public Involvement*



These workshops continued through mid-afternoon of the first day. The conferees then started a second round of workshops on the same five topics, so that each participant would have a chance to attend two topical workshops.

This led into dinner with a formal speaker. In Tampa, this was Mr. Ralph D. Turlington. In Denver, it was Dr. Stephen Knezevich.

On the morning of the second day, participants concluded the second workshop. This was followed by a general meeting for critique and summary of the entire conference.

The meetings closed with lunch. In Tampa, the speaker was Congressman Albert H. Quie. In Denver, it was Dr. Leon Lessinger.

WHO WERE THE PARTICIPANTS?

The participants – some 130 at each conference – represented a range of interests. The following tabulation breaks them down by their own descriptions of their primary identification. (Primary, because they could have more than one – a teacher or a State Department of Education representative could also, for instance, be a parent, or serving on a Regional Board.) Most, but not all, participants gave themselves such an identification.

The two meetings also encompassed a broad geographic range, with participants representing 38 states.

IDENTIFICATION OF PARTICIPANTS

Teacher	30
Local School Administrator	90
Regional Educational Agency	8
State Department of Education	54
State Board of Education	3
Local Board of Education	1
Student (High School or College)	4
Higher Education	15
Legislature-connected	8
Governor's Staff	2
Federal Agency	6
Parent	8
Lay Member of Accountability Committee	10
Organization Other Than Educational	14

HOW DID THE PARTICIPANTS FEEL IN THE BEGINNING?

Those who were to attend the conferences had in advance been asked to complete (anonymously) and return a questionaire designed to make a light probing of their attitudes toward educational accountability. Their summarized responses show the words selected by

most and by fewest respondents in a number of categories:

- *Personal feeling about accountability: 105 challenging and 1 boring.*
- *Need for accountability: 89 essential and 2 too costly.*
- *Appropriate future for accountability: 88, put in proper perspective and 1 left alone.*

WHAT IS THIS SUBJECT THEY MET ABOUT?

So they came together – this spread of people from this spread of states, with these pre-dispositions, to attend these sessions dealing with certain techniques – all focusing on educational accountability.

It is not inappropriate to ask, "And what is that?"

It is, to be sure, the emotionally charged issue and operationally demanding concept described by Dr. Knezevich; but that does not define it. Each of the principal speakers took a stab at defining or re-defining.

Perhaps one definition, uniformly accepted, will never be reached. But the one central fact that emerged as these meetings went on was that everyone participating shared an at least generalized notion of what it is. That centrality may be read in a mid-speech definition given by Dr. Lessinger, who is commonly called the father of accountability and therefore has a first right to the nomenclature:

"Currently, what is called accountability is a responsibility for stipulated results and for reporting both the degree of our success in achieving those results and the costs that were attributed to that effort."

Very well. Though the emotionally charged issues remain – particularly that of what all this means to classroom teachers, who were not conspicuous by their presence at the Tampa meeting and were embarrassingly conspicuous by their absence from the Denver meeting – the participants did indeed agree that that, at the minimum, educational accountability requires Dr. Lessinger's components:

- *Responsibility*
- *Stipulated results*
- *Reporting*
- *Degree of success*
- *Associated costs*

With that central understanding, the conferees went to work.

PDQ
(PARABLES, DIVERTISSEMENTS AND QUOTES)
Dr. Holowenzak displayed a unique ability to achieve consensus amid a large group about to set foot on the thorny path of accountability. Beginning a short presentation at the Denver meeting, he said:

"Will you all accommodate me by raising your right hand?" All did.

He pressed on. "And will you all please say "I"? All did.

"Good," said he. "We have started out with a unanimous vote."

THEY HEARD. . .

The first thing the participants heard, in general session, was an overview of accountability by Dr. Lesley H. Browder Jr., Associate Professor of Education, School of Education, Hofstra University.

In keeping with REACT's emphasis on what has already been accomplished, rather than an attempt to break new ground, this was in large part a reprise of a publication Dr. Browder had previously prepared for CAP ("Who's Afraid of Educational Accountability? A Representative Review of the Literature") and an attempt to fit accountability into its place in a threatened future.

Dr. Browder took a long and scholarly path to arrive at a central truth: Society needs to have its children educated; education must proceed with a reasonable efficiency; accountability is a means toward that end.

In overview, he noted, from 1969 when accountability began to gather momentum, it has boomed remarkably – an information blizzard of more than 4,000 books and articles, for instance, and legislative activity related to accountability in more than 30 states.

Though the blizzard of information is modern, the concept of accountability is ancient, Dr. Browder said:

"The notion of accountability is anchored in a role relationship between people. In organizations, this relationship is between those who occupy a given role position (I like to call them stewards), and those who hold the formal powers of dismissal (I call these people reviewers). Traditionally, the task of the steward has been to answer for the results of work expected from him in the role he performs.

"Answering for work results is commonly understood as being accountable. The reviewer either listens to the steward's tale, checks his work, or otherwise seeks information to substantiate what the steward claimed. For the reviewer, the task is to decide whether to continue to place trust and confidence in the steward, or to dismiss him and get someone else."

Modern accountability differs principally from this ancient pattern, Dr. Browder said, in sharpening the understanding of what is expected before any work is done:

"In its most extreme form, the new accountability asks who exactly is responsible

STEWARDS, REVIEWERS AND THE FUTURE: OVERVIEW

for what precisely; to whom particularly; under what conditions specifically; with what specified outcomes, precisely stated; using what designated procedures to report and to verify the outcomes obtained; and with what predetermined rewards and/or penalties accruing from the results obtained."

Attached to this stress on clarity is the concept that "the work itself will become more efficient; that is, it will be possible to increase either the minimization of inputs or the maximization of outputs, or both."

In pursuit of this clarity and this increased efficiency, Dr. Browder described four (or perhaps five) common forms of accountability in public education.

** The emergence of systems-based technologies: PPBS, MIS, Critical Path and the like, which, coupled to the computer, can handle much complex data with highly visible outcomes. Such systems, he predicted, "can be expected to continue to proliferate and penetrate into educational operations. By their very nature they make things more accountable in order to simply function at all."*

** The use of behavioral objectives based on the theory that if a child learns his behavior will change; that therefore it makes sense to set educational goals and objectives of the sort calculated to produce desirable change; and that the change is measurable and therefore the entire process accountable.*

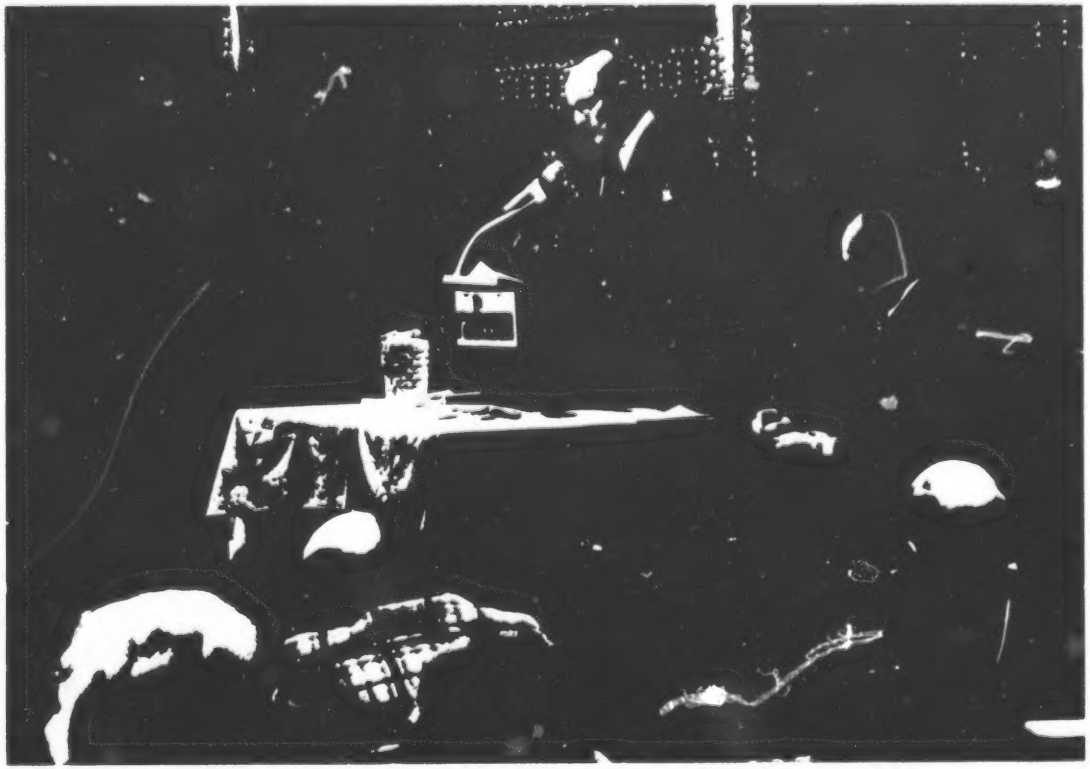
** Verification of educational outcomes. This manifests itself in two principal ways. One is the use of an Educational Program Auditor who, like the CPA, examines the educational books and reports on what he finds as against what he was told was expected of the program. The other manifestation is public and legislative pressure to use state-level testing programs as a check on local districts.*

** Increased community participation in the control and decision-making processes of the schools and/or in determining the school's educational goals and objectives.*

** Alternative forms of education; permitting the consumer to vote with his feet for the kind of education he wants. "To me," Dr. Browder said, "such alternatives have appeal of their own, and should not be considered as forms of accountability."*

Used singly or in combination, these are the common forms of accountability. To what end?

Drawing materials from several recent widely-read books, Dr. Browder then launched in-



A Phi Beta Kappa and Magna Cum Laude graduate of Lehigh University, Lesley Browder received an M.A. in American history, Ed.M. in secondary education, and Ed.D. in school administration all at Cornell University. The recipient of many academic and professional honors, he has been a teacher in the Lincoln Township (Mass.) Public Schools, a deputy and assistant superintendent with the South Kingstown (R.I.) School Department, superintendent of the Mahwah (N.J.) Public Schools, a lecturer in education at Stanford University, and has held several educational posts with Ford Foundation-funded projects. He is the author of three books dealing with educational accountability, many educational articles, papers, and lectures. His many advisory and consultant assignments include service on the editorial advisory board of NATION'S SCHOOLS, Task Force on Governance and Organization, National Institute of Education, and the chairmanship of the Accountability Interest Group, National Conference of Professors of Educational Administration. Current association memberships include Phi Delta Kappa, AASA, AAUP, AERA and ASCD.

to the perils confronting this small planet, concentrating on three main sources of a growing pessimism: Confidence-shaking events (Vietnam War, Watergate, riots, hijackings, assassinations); failure of the present middle age generation to pass its values to its children (and hence drugs, changing sex mores, dropouts); and a startling deterioration of life quality (energy crises, pollution, overpopulation).

Why this threnody, this recital of present woes and potential future tragedy, at a conference dealing with educational accountability?

Because in the end, Dr. Browder said, "We need to plan more carefully the expenditure of our precious resources – time, money, people, materials . . . . Among the most essential tasks of interdependent societies, especially technological ones like ours, is society's dependence on certain persons to educate its children, to prepare and shape its future citizens. Many depend upon a few to educate their children. These few cannot fail in the desired tasks to operate within the bounds of reasonable efficiency; in sum, to employ means of keeping the educational process accountable and responsive to the needs of tomorrow."

HOW CAN WE PROVE THAT WE ARE DOING BETTER?

Speaker at the conference dinner in Tampa was Ralph D. Turlington, Commissioner of Education for the Florida Department of Education.

Mr. Turlington rested the case for educational accountability squarely on the proposition that the educational climate and educational demands have changed sharply.

Growth, prosperity and upward mobility were the distinguishing features of the nation – and therefore the climate for education – from the 1950s into the early 1970s, he noted. The principal factors influencing education during this period were "dramatic increases in the number of students; pressure from the courts to correct the wrongs of previous generations; and rapid increases in educational costs."

By way of example, he cited some Florida changes during this period:

• Number of students up from 445,744 to 1,525,405.

• Cost per child up from $173 to $1058.

• Total K-12 education cost in the state up from $98 million to $1.8 billion.

"Unfortunately," Mr. Turlington said, "we were so preoccupied with the task of meeting these rapidly changing needs that we failed to communicate about the victories that we were, and still are, winning in our schools. There is no question in my mind but that education today is better than ever. Students know more and are better prepared for being productive and knowledgeable citizens.

"I firmly believe this to be true – but I can't provide concrete courtroom evidence, because we in education do not have at hand the evaluative systems appropriate to the programs we are operating. We haven't yet provided an adequate yardstick by which our accomplishments can be fairly measured."

This, he said, is why the time for educational accountability has arrived:

"The public is demanding that those of us in education be held accountable for the way in which we use our resources, and for the quality of our product. Unless we can be and are willing to be held accountable, unless there is a way to judge our accountability, unless when held account-

13

PDQ
(PARABLES, DIVERTISSEMENTS AND QUOTES)
Mr. Turlington told of the farmer whose horse had fallen sick, and who went to a neighbor reputed to be canny with horses to describe the symptoms. The canny neighbor nodded, noted that a horse of his had displayed the same symptoms, and allowed as how he had treated the horse with a pint of paregoric. The farmer hurried home and administered a pint of paregoric to his own horse – which promptly went into a shaking fit, keeled over and died. The farmer hastened back to the canny neighbor to describe what he had done and how the horse had died.

"Funny," said the neighbor. "The same thing happened to mine."

THEY HEARD. . .

PDQ
(PARABLES, DIVERTISSEMENTS AND QUOTES)
Dr. Knezevich told of the fifth grade teacher who thought she had done splendidly in teaching the parts of the human body, and decided to test whether the quality of the learning matched that of the teaching. One test paper reflected the learning in these words:

"There are three parts to the human body: the brainium, the borax and the abominable cavity.

"The brainium contains the brain, if any. The borax contains the lights, lung and heart. The abominable cavity contains the bowels, of which there are five – a,e,i,o and u."

able we measure up to our responsibilities – we face the very real possibility of losing our public backing and being unable to raise the financial support necessary to adequately maintain the educational enterprise."

The touchstone to measuring educational output, he said, is to face up to these questions:

** What is happening to children?*

** What skills are being acquired by those we serve?*

** What evidence of increase in educational output can we offer?*

** What is the quality of our work?*

** Is anybody learning anything?*

For any of these outcome questions there is a paucity of information – partly, Mr. Turlington observed, because educators have been unwilling to gather comparable data. This in turn can be partially explained because, "There are those who wish to use the data generated as a means of punishment . . . . they would like a testing system which would analyze data and print out a list of those to be punished."

It must both become true, and be perceived by educators to be true, that educational data can be used for constructive purposes, Mr. Turlington said. He described one such set of constructive purposes in these terms:

"Accountability could have significant favorable impact on public education if it:

" 1. Could be positively tied to educational policy making.

" 2. Compares the status quo to the outcomes of the alternative options available to the decision makers.

" 3. Results in an increase in the amount of information that the public has about the really fine jobs that are being done in many public schools.

" 4. Identifies efficient and cost-effective educational methodologies."

A native of Gainesville, Florida, Ralph Turlington was graduated from the University of Florida with a B.S. in business administration, and received his Master's degree in business administration from Harvard University. He has a record of public service spanning 27 years as educator, legislator, and businessman. In 1950 he was a successful candidate for the Florida House of Representatives and served in the Legislature until his appointment as Commissioner of Education in 1974. When he resigned the Legislature, he was known as the "dean" of the House, had held all the top legislative positions, received more awards for distinguished service, and voted on more individual roll calls than any other legislator in Florida history. With primary interests in education and finance, his 12 years' service on the House Education Committee is a record. Mr. Turlington is the coauthor of a book, THE LEGISLATOR'S GUIDE TO SCHOOL FINANCE, and he is a member of Phi Delta Kappa and several honorary scholastic societies.

SHIFTING THE SCALES FROM INPUT TO OUTCOME

Speaker at the conference dinner in Denver was Dr. Stephen J. Knezevich, dean of the School of Education of the University of Southern California.

It is largely through the leadership of state education agencies – with a special bow to CAP – that the "educational profession has moved from a purely rhetorical exercise to the stark reality of what life is going to be like in an age of accountability," Dr. Knezevich told the Denver conference.

Accountability has, indeed, become such a way of life that it has dethroned "relevance" as the most popular term in the lexicon of writers, speakers and legislators reflecting on education, he went on. And well done: for relevance remained largely idealistic and appealing to romantics, while accountability has a more pragmatic image: "It may be perceived as a mechanism for the implementation of the more idealistic desires to enhance the relevance of educational opportunities provided by the nation's schools."

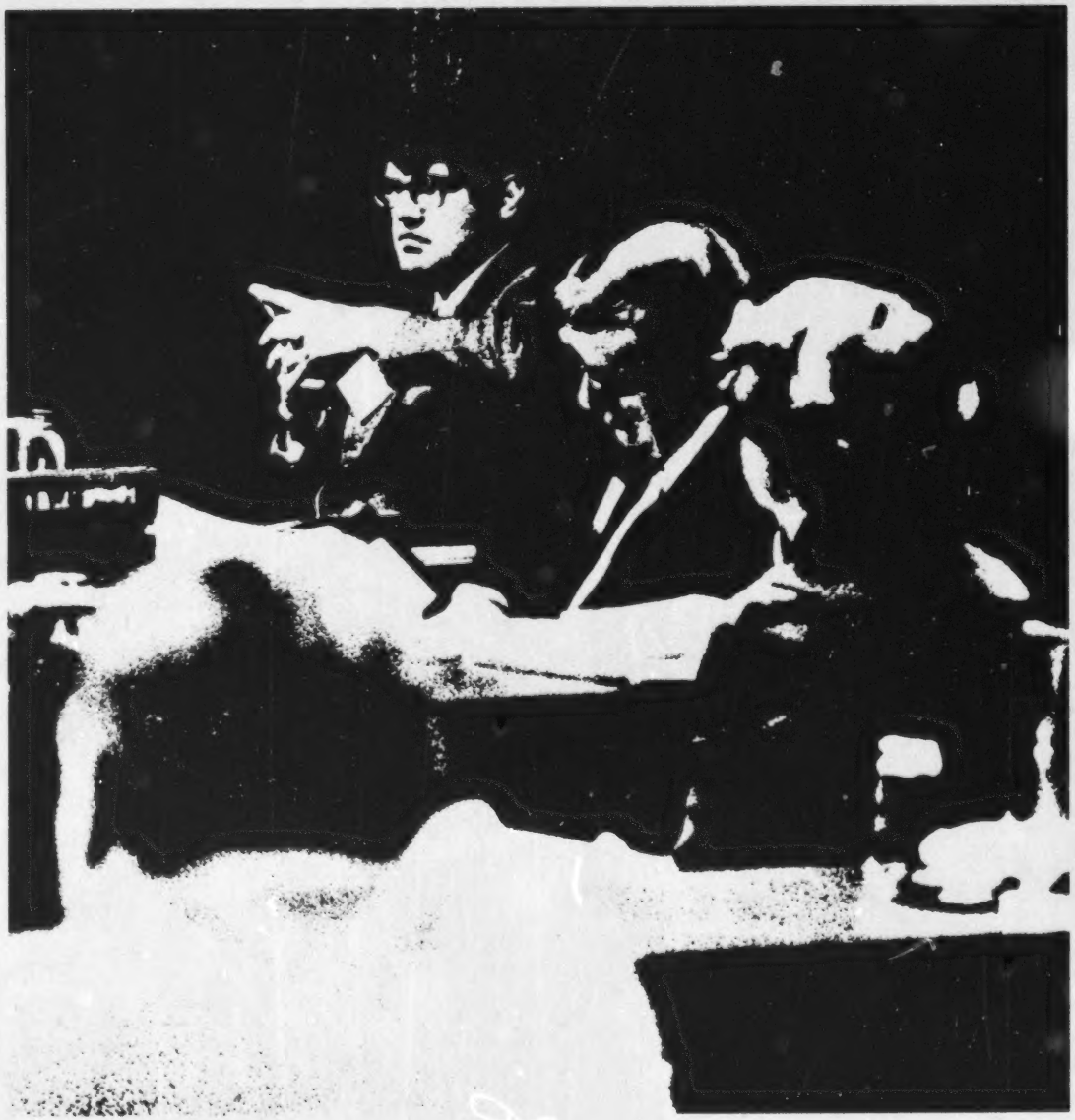
Agreeing with the literature (and more particularly with Dr. Browder, quoted earlier) that accountability has a long history, Dr. Knezevich noted that historically it guarded inputs – that is to say, it was on the order of a fiscal accounting system checking that inputs went to assigned purposes.

"What fires the imagination of the citizen and legislator alike is the desire to improve the quantity and quality of educational outcomes; and in so doing to strike a more favorable relationship between resources consumed in the educational process and the results obtained from it."

One of the notable aspects of accountability, Dr. Knezevich said, is that it spells "the demise of the long standing but questionable tradition that dogmatically asserted that high academic standards demand high rates of failure . . . . Accountability put us in a whole new ball game, and switched the focus to successful outcomes and away from the inevitability of failures or dropouts."

This, he added, is why "accountability strikes fear in the hearts of some teachers.

"They are concerned lest comprehensive accountability be interpreted as guaranteed



outcomes that cannot be delivered in the light of limited resources available to them, the lack of cooperation teachers get from parents, diminishing authority at the classroom level, or the still rudimentary state of the art of stimulating learning among pupils facing unusual social, psychological or economic problems."

Teachers and other educational personnel do "have a major role and cannot shirk responsibility in promoting learning," he declared.

"Nonetheless, education in a state or nation is a complex, integrated social system because it does have many and varied goals. Taxpayers, parents, responsible citizens and learners are involved along with the professionals employed. If one part of the educational enterprise fails to deliver what rightfully can be expected, another may be handicapped or simply unable to satisfy accountability demands.

"I believe that joint accountability rather than individual accountability will prevail, and we should design a system of joint rather than single accountability."

Thus too, he noted, one cannot have an accountability system if there are goal conflicts – "that is, where the people of a community or a state or a nation cannot agree on what should be the outcome or what should be the priorities in an educational system."

Accountability can be a costly business, Dr. Knezevich stressed, defining a cost as "any resource that is consumed – the energy of the staff, money, depletion of supplies, material and equipment, or what-have-you." He advised splitting the cost among three phases:

** Phase One – readiness. This phase is full of hidden costs – establishment of goals, development of plans and programs, all of which require significant human resources.*

**Phase Two – start-up. This is the phase in which most practitioners can isolate costs for collecting, processing and analyzing new kinds of data. It is generally for this that staff is reorganized and new staff added.*

** Phase Three – steady state. This phase recognizes that a first attempt is rarely perfect – that, for instance, objectives will have to be redrafted. This constant modification also incurs significant cost.*

Not only should practitioners recognize these three phases of cost, Dr. Knezevich said – they should resist the tendency to focus on those elements of cost which are easiest to obtain:

"Unit costs for inputs represent relatively few problems when compared with identifying unit costs for outputs. The big hang-up in operationalizing comprehensive accountability is on the output side of the equation. We have just begun to identify the indicators of achievement, of effectiveness. The state of the art on the output side is at least 25 years behind the costing of input."

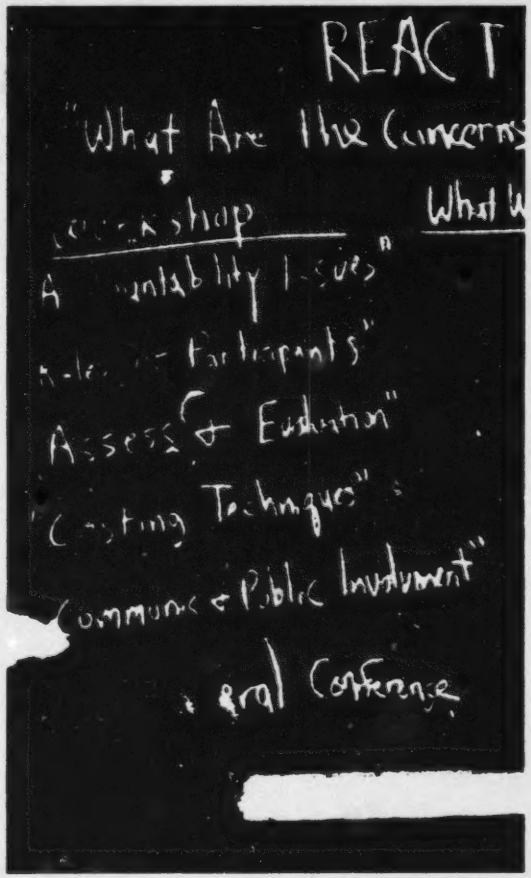
Born in Milwaukee, Stephen Knezevich received his B.S. from the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, his M.S. in school administration from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and his Ph.D. in educational administration also from the University of Wisconsin, Madison. He spent ten years as a science and math teacher, coach, principal, and superintendent in Wisconsin public schools. His work as a college professor has included positions at the University of Tulsa, University of Iowa, Florida State University, University of Wisconsin, Madison, and several additional summer appointments.

PDQ
(PARABLES, DIVERTISSEMENTS AND QUOTES)

Can we survive, Dr. Browder asked his audience? We are confronted with the big problems – the population crisis, the energy crisis, inflation. In addition, we are confronted with multiple failures – even our once vaunted technology lets us down. Things just don't seem to work any more.

With that, the loudspeaker system failed. Dr. Browder concluded his remarks anent our survival in something approaching a private soliloquy.

Dr. Knezevich was the first director of the AASA National Academy for School Executives and associate secretary, American Association of School Administrators. A principal investigator in the Wisconsin Research and Development Center for Cognitive Learning, he assumed his current post at the University of Southern California in July, 1974. He is the author of 11 books, eight AASA paperbacks, and extensive additional published material and has held numerous significant appointments on committees, panels, and in consultation roles.



FEDERAL INTEREST IN THE EDUCATION OF THE CHILD

The closing speaker for the Tampa conference was United States Representative Albert H. Quie of the First District of Minnesota.

Whereas the prime position of the word "accountability" in the educational lexicon was noted with what appeared to be approval by Dr. Knezevich, it made Congressman Quie uncomfortable.

"Accountability is in danger of becoming the most overworked word in education," declared the Minnesota representative. "For some it has assumed emotional proportion nearly equivalent to terms such as 'busing,' 'strikes' and 'racial balance.' Personally I find that very disturbing and, from the viewpoint of the health of our educational system, very undesirable."

He put his finger on one of the sources of this emotional content as he counted off the various meanings accountability has to various users of the word:

"To some it regrettably means a way to 'get teachers'; to some it means a scientific process to measure performance, to others a management technique, and to still others it is a popular political phrase which gains one sympathy with the voters, if not with teachers."

Agreeing with other speakers about the significance of the fact that more than 30 states have enacted some sort of accountability legislation, Congressman Quie noted that the flurry of legislative activity peaked in 1971 and has been falling off since.

One stated reason – with which he said he was not certain he could agree – was increased uncertainty over Federal funding, and state realization that large-scale accountability projects could be costly.

Another reason, he said, might be that "the sensitivity of the teacher organizations to anything termed 'accountability' has made states much more cautious in enacting any new accountability laws. It may also be that the confusion and uncertainty surrounding the use of the term has also contributed to a degree of caution."

Federal interest in accountability remains high, he said – adding that he might be defining the term more broadly than some participants.

"In my view," said the Congressman, "the term includes virtually all activities designed to establish a relationship of performance to a program or activity. Under my definition, program evaluations and efforts aimed at what has come to be known as consumer protection also fall under the general term of accountability."

He then set forth his view on what is perhaps the most emotion-laden aspect of accountability – the question of who is accountable.

He said, "Let me put to rest any concerns which you may have about what I believe to be the major responsibilities of the major participants in that most common form of accountability – what goes on in the education of a child. I do not believe that the burden lies entirely with the teacher or with the school. I believe that in education the responsibility to teach and to learn is one that must be shared by parents, school administrators, the child and the teacher . . . . in the final analysis nothing can replace the dialogue between the major participants in which all of this knowledge is brought to bear on the solution of a problem involving an individual child."

A recent survey of attitudes indicates that this notion of shared responsibility is widespread, he noted. Asked who bears the principal blame for the failure of a child to do well in school, 62 percent of the respondents said the child's home life, 13 percent the child, another 13 percent the teacher, and 5 percent the school.

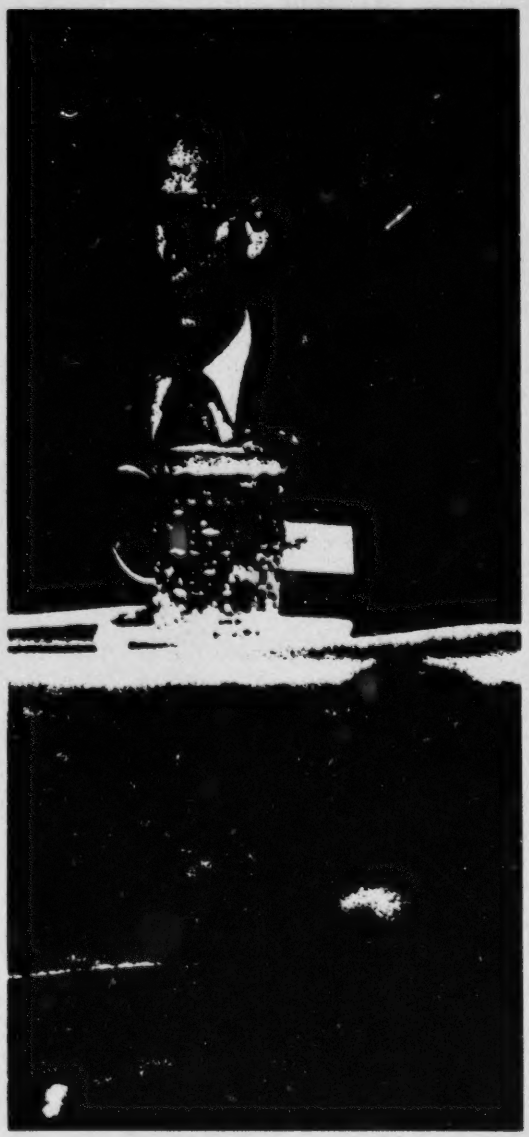
Congressman Quie reviewed major legislative provisions enacted by the last Congress dealing with accountability. He reminded his audience at the outset that the Federal expression of interest must take a different form than state or local activity: "We must bear in mind that the Federal role in education is not dominant, even though it has more impact than we expect. Federal interest in and concern for accountability . . . . is, of course, almost always limited to a direct relationship with the flow of Federal support."

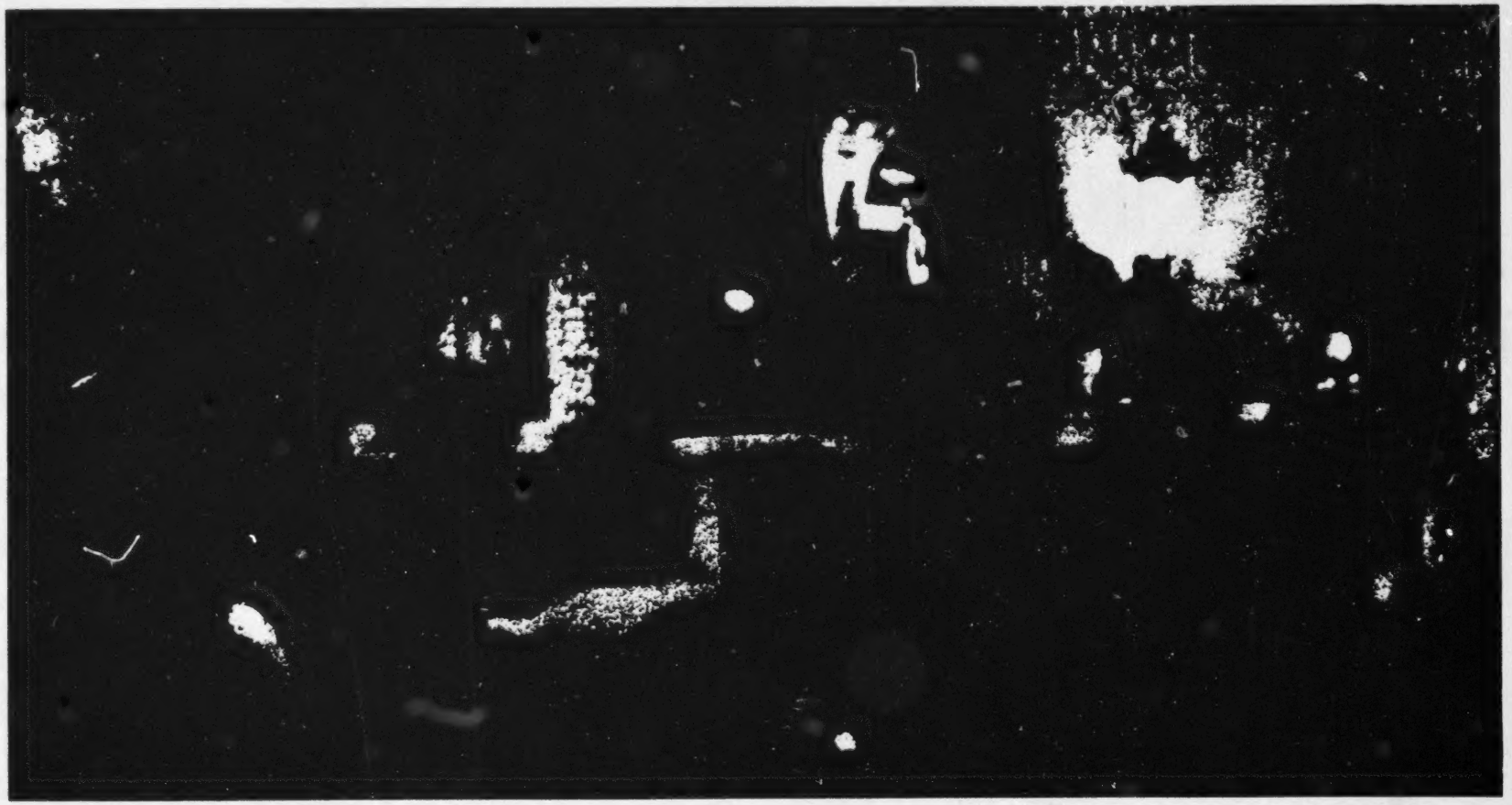
Among the new provisions he outlined:

** A requirement that each school building receiving Title I-ESEA funds establish a parent advisory council.*

** A requirement for establishment by the U.S. Office of Education of models for Title I evaluation.*

** A three-year, $15 million study of the*





Following service as a U.S. Navy pilot during World War II, Albert Quie was graduated from St. Olaf College (Minn.) in 1950 with a major in political science. In 1954, he was elected to the Minnesota State Senate and served in the 1955 and 1957 sessions while operating a dairy farm. Rep. Quie was elected to Congress in February, 1958, and as the ranking Republican member of the House Education and Labor Committee, is nationally recognized as a leading spokesman on education in the House who has played a major role in shaping education legislation in recent years. Legislation to expand education opportunities to educationally deprived children under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was one of Quie's major accomplishments in 1974. He has been instrumental in shaping legislation for student assistance and aid to all levels of education for many years. As well as being one of the main authors of the Higher Education Amendments of 1972, he also has been active in behalf of programs for preschool and early childhood education. Quie has been prominent in the area of agricultural legislation. He holds honorary doctorate degrees from St. Olaf College, Buena Vista College of Iowa, Gettysburg College (Penn.), Greenville College (Ill.), Capital University (Ohio), and Gallaudet College (Washington, D.C.). A member of the House Republican Policy Committee, it was Rep. Quie who offered the proposal to open all sessions of the Education and Labor Committee to the public. It was the first committee to do so.

effectiveness of compensatory education programs by the National Institute of Education.

** A Title I amendment encouraging individualization of programs.*

Conceding that the new Congress is too young to have established a record, Congressman Quie noted there will be before it a number of issues important to education - and of these, a number related to accountability.

"WE CAN DO MAGNIFICENT THINGS. . .TOGETHER"

The closing speaker for the Denver conference was Dr. Leon M. Lessinger, dean of the College of Education of the University of South Carolina.

"That was the Leon Lessinger who died several years ago," he said, referring to the definition of accountability as "the rational philosophy for obtaining the true answers to all the important problems of education."

Well, maybe. But more likely an exaggeration; for whatever the father of accountability has been chided or praised for, it has hardly been a simplistic approach to serious questions.

But a father surely has a right, if not a duty, to see his child differently as the child moves from infant to robust youth to . . . . wherever it will finally come out. The child moves through stages, and is to be treated appropriately to each stage; the important question is whether it remains the same child – which is to say, did the father perceive it perceptively from the beginning?

A difference in view: "I find recently that I like to talk about accountability and humanism . . . . I have a notion that we have taken this concept too seriously, and that we have forgotten about the human condition." But does that amount to a difference in perception?

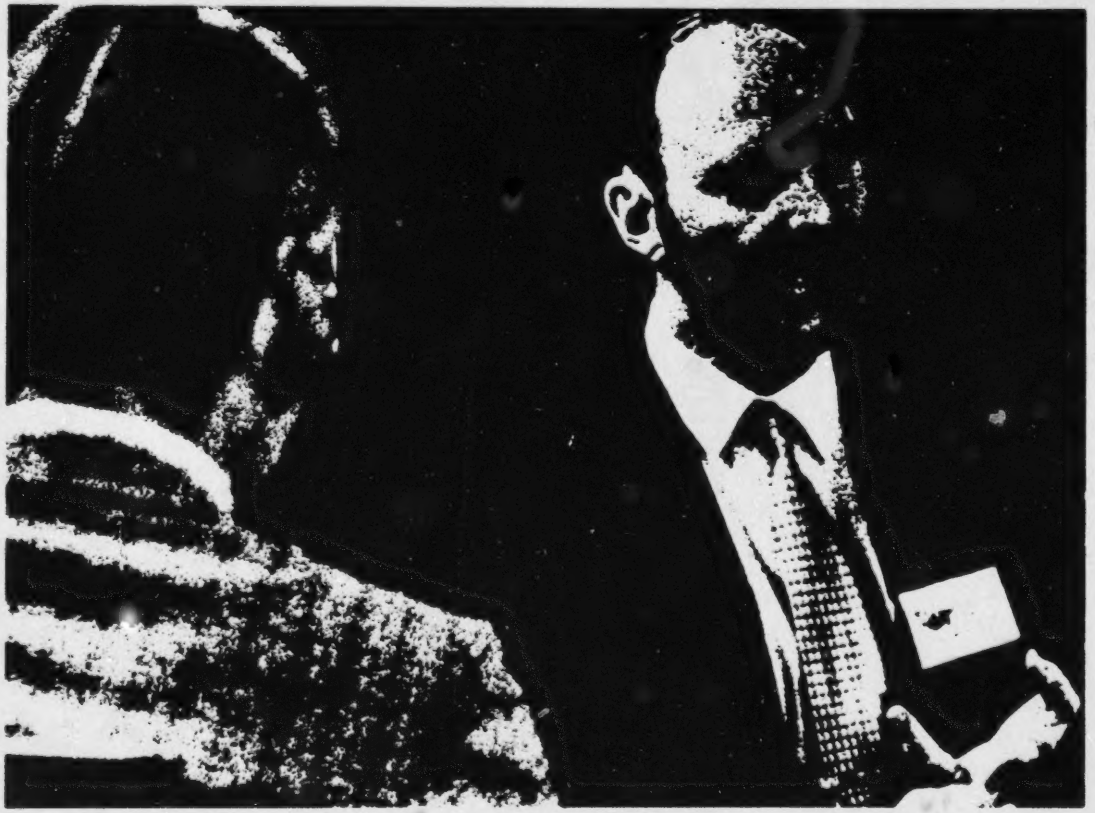
A difference, perhaps, in argumentativeness: "I think we are all aware of the fact that few people want to argue against accountability, especially for others."

Surely not a difference in focus, no matter the trend of the attacks and the carping over the past five or more years: "I want today to talk about the fact that the teacher is probably the unit that ought to be addressed last, that as a matter of fact the unit of accountability is the school and the school district, and the time frame probably is three to five years. I shall argue very strongly that we would be well advised to take this most powerful notion as basic to a society as justice and mercy."

Dr. Lessinger celebrated again his belief in the basic notion of accountability:

"We can do magnificent things if we can agree together that we want to find out what's going on for the purpose of getting where we want to go. That's called quality control. It is a systematic attempt to get

THEY HEARD...



where you want to go.

"Without that notion, accountability will never be accepted. It will be sabotaged, which it is; it will be struck against, which it is; and we shall have the unlovely notion of a great profession flying in the face of common sense – 'cause there ain't no way you can strike against accountability."

Because he was there at the birth of the movement, Dr. Lessinger asserted his right to say what it was about. "It was born not out of business, and not out of a desire to save money, and not out of a desire to have efficiency or effectiveness. It grew out of a concern for the bilingual act and the dropout prevention act."

And he quoted himself out of that 1969 period:

"The programs of dropout prevention and bilingual education are employing several management tools which should improve results for federal dollars invested in these programs. Also, these tools have ramifications for all federal dollars spent on education. Among the tools are accountability, technical assistance and independent educational accomplishment audits."

There is no longer any reasonable doubt

about the answer to the biblical question about being one's brother's keeper, Dr. Lessinger asserted:

"That child who gets an inferior education ends up as an adult who doesn't turn the nut on the wheel of your airplane – and you crash. And that child whose needs you didn't meet gets ill, and that illness spreads – and you get sick."

He conceded that the writing of objectives is far easier in the cognitive domain than in others, and that critics of this have their point – but he challenged educators to blunt that point.

"Aren't there more things than behavioral objectives? What about the things of the spirit? What about insights, understanding, appreciation, the affective domain? What about it? You can't write behavioral objectives for that. Doesn't this mean that accountability of necessity will be restricted to the training experience?

"I think not. I hope not. If you asked me to see around the country, I would say the pessimists are probably right. It seems to be going in that direction, and I think that's our fault as educators.

"Instead of fighting it, we need to work it for us. There's nobody from on high saying to us what accountability is. There's no group of Mafia sitting somewhere deciding what educational accountability is.

"Here is an idea, waiting for the profession to deal with."

Dr. Lessinger concluded with a warning that his child is not a simple child.

"I think it should be obvious that accountability is not a simple concept.

"It does not require uniformity of standards. It does require clear objectives or clear descriptions of experience. It does not specify objectives, but objectives must be specified. The best ways for deriving objectives are through needs assessments, cooperative inquiry and cooperative development.

"It does not demand assembly-line learning sequences. If the objectives or experiences are specified, it will be generally found that there are many alternative processes for achieving the objectives.

"It does not emphasize minimum performance at low cost. It does emphasize how well the objectives were met, what the cost was to achieve them, and what effective and efficient ways there are to close the gap between what is, and what was intended."

Often referred to as the "father" of educational accountability, Leon Lessinger's career has ranged from U.S. Army engineer on the atomic bomb project during World War II to Associate United States Commissioner for Elementary and Secondary Education, U.S. Office of Education (1968-70). He has been a teacher, assistant superintendent, and superintendent in California schools and was chief research consultant for the California State Study of Gifted Programs. From 1970 to 1972 he was Callaway Professor of Education at Georgia State University. Dr. Lessinger's professional honors include appointment by Vice President Humphrey to launch the National Teacher Corps, membership on the President's Youth Opportunity Council, membership on the Advisory Commission to Education Professions Development Act, membership on the Commission to Reform Secondary Education, and Distinguished Professor of the National Academy for School Executives. The author of four books and many articles, Dr. Lessinger earned his B.S. in mechanical engineering at North Carolina State College, his B.A. in psychology at U.C.L.A., and his Ed.D in educational psychology at U.C.L.A. He is a licensed clinical psychologist in California.

THEY SAID. . .

Considerably more than half the scheduled time at both the Tampa and Denver conferences was devoted to mini-workshops dealing with five areas: accountability issues; roles of participants; assessment and evaluation; costing techniques; and communication and public involvement. Further, the closing critique and summary dealt largely with these workshops. Each conference participant attended two of these workshops.

The workshops were, then, the heart of the conference.

The workshop leaders were persons deeply experienced in the topics. In all the areas, CAP had previously put out publications that were available to the participants.

Thus the participants were well supported; and they went at it.

ACCOUNTABILITY ISSUES

Because of the popularity of this topic, each of its workshops divided into two teams. Thus there were, in effect, four workshops dealing with issues at each of the conferences, rather than the standard two.

Leaders for this topic were Dr. Archie A. Buchmiller, assistant superintendent, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction; James H. Gold, assessment director of the same department; and Bernard A. Kaplan and Maureen Webster, both senior research fellows at the Educational Policy Research Center, Syracuse, N.Y.

These leaders confessed that they weren't sure that theirs was an appropriate topic for the REACT conferences, which were called to deal with techniques rather than issues. Whatever their misgivings, they led lively sessions.

Samples of the issues touched upon and the comments made follow.

PRACTICE IN VARIOUS STATES

The leaders handed out sample laws dealing with accountability in various states, ranging from the simplest case (a requirement for statewide testing of basic subjects, defined as reading, writing and computation skills)

to comprehensive laws requiring the essentials of accountability – definition of goals and objectives, testing of results, analysis of costs, measurement of efficiency and public reporting.

This inspired a number of statements on what is occurring in various states:

"We try to measure the learning environment, the educational process and the output." (Utah)

A counter-statement: "How do you measure environment? From some preconception of what kind of environment is good?"

"Our view is that accountability is a process – a process that has certain necessary elements." (Colorado)

Icy counter-statement: "It's more than a process – it's a concept. And that is why you can't implement accountability – you can only im;lement certain techniques that deal with accountability. It's unfortunate that there are any laws at all on this subject, because they divert attention from the concept to the techniques."

"Right. But the question is, how do you avoid legislation?" (Montana)

25

THEY SAID. . .

PDQ
(PARABLES, DIVERTISSEMENTS AND QUOTES)

Those concerned with accountability, noted Dr. Wilsey, should keep in mind that what is learned is a product of the learner as well as the learning experience.

Your ordinary cat who sits on a hot stove lid learns not to sit on any stove lid. A wiser cat learns to distinguish hot from cold stove lids.

On the other hand – is it all that wise to want to sit on cold stove lids?

"It matters whether the legislation is mandatory or voluntary. We can live with the voluntary kind."

"In our state, the law requires each district to do its own assessment. Some districts do a good job. Others just don't give a damn." (Wyoming)

TESTING PROGRAMS

Almost every state has done an educational needs assessment, the workshop leaders pointed out. Almost all the assessments have given a high priority to pupil competence in basic skills. This touched off the following comments:

"Sure, the basic skills. And what are they – reading, writing and computational skills like in the Arizona model?"

"Some of us think that the survival skills are at least equally important."

"Agreed. But where are the testing instruments in these other skills? If you can't test them accurately, they fall outside the umbrella of accountability and therefore lose priority."

"We are victims, of course, of the publishing houses in more ways than one. We teach what they give us to teach; we test with the instruments they provide. They don't have programs or instruments dealing with very much beyond the basic skills."

"Why not?"

"Money."

"Well, we can't let them go on forever saying, 'These areas are just too fuzzy to test.'"

"Money."

"Copout."

"Once they come up with the test results – in the 3Rs, if nothing else – what is done with them?"

"In our state we do one of two things, depending on the political climate of the moment. I'm assuming the results are bad. In the normal climate, we try to hide them. If it looks as if it might work, we parade them, and scream for more state money."

"We have what I call accountability by shame. We have to report our results – and we have to try harder if the results are bad."

"Sure try harder – but using what tools? If you had known a better way beforehand, you would have used it. The usual testing program is useless – it's even harmful. It does nothing for the pupil; and generally it hurts the teacher and the school."

"Personally, I ignore tests. I have to give them, because that's the law, but my time is

too precious for me to pay any attention to them."

"Perhaps it's because too many of us ignore tests that better use isn't made of them. Even if they dealt only with the basics – and they don't – they do give valuable information."

"Such as?"

"Such as, damn it, whether children can read! We're at the heart of accountability here. We really can't all agree that reporting is a necessary part of the accountability system, and then sit here and turn up our noses at the one thing that can be reported and that everybody wants to know."

"Now we're back to the comparisons – this school does better than that, this district does better than that. I've never seen the comparison that helped anybody."

"One way of help was pointed out a little while ago – getting more state money, once you can prove the need."

"Get more money, perhaps – or get fired."

"We heard that earlier – getting fired is one of the things that can happen to the steward if he doesn't perform."

"Which doesn't seem unreasonable."

RECIPROCAL ACCOUNTABILITY

The issue of reciprocal accountability was introduced to one workshop by a high school student, a member of an accountability committee:

"The emphasis up to now has been on evaluating the student. I suppose it's a fair enough starting place, though I personally am sick of being tested. But my interest now is to reverse the process – to evaluate the distributors of education. In my view, every student has a right to a suitable educational environment, and we ought to begin evaluating that."

"I agree," said a member of a local school board. "There is a reciprocal right at every stage. The student is accountable to the school, and the school to the students. The board is accountable to the people, and the people to the board. The state board is accountable to the Legislature, and the Legislature to the state board."

"I think we are touching on equity." said a participant representing a non-educational agency. "We started off in accountability with emphasis on costs and inputs. We have begun to move toward outcomes. We have just begun to think about equity."

THEY SAID...

PDQ
(PARABLES, DIVERTISSEMENTS AND QUOTES)
There was a blackboard in the Denver room in which the Maryland team was presenting its costing techniques. On the board, as the first workshop broke up and the second started, appeared this equation:

$$\frac{23 \times 15}{23 \times 5 \times 18.0} = 1.67$$

A new participant elicited the information that one of the Maryland leaders was responsible for the equation. On his way out the door, he was mumbling something about lost faith.

COSTING TECHNIQUES

Leaders of the workshop dealing with costing techniques were two staff members of the Maryland State Department of Education: Dr. Stephen P. Holowenzak, specialist in accountability, and Robert A. Stagmer, specialist in state aid.

This was in large part a hands-on working session, rather than a discussion workshop.

The starting place was a 1974 CAP publication, "Costs of Educational Accountability: A Maryland Exploratory Study." The principal workshop activity was completion of sample work sheets starting the process of capturing costs at the classroom level for an accountability program.

Efforts to gather any data – including the data required for costing accountability – often fail for one reason, the resource leaders told their workshops: the data doesn't do anything for the people gathering it. If they can't see value in it, they are inclined to be less than enthusiastic about gathering it or checking its accuracy. Thus, a central principle in costing accountability should be to bring the data back to the local teacher-classroom level in ways that make sense.

The model on which the participants worked followed this sequence:

1. Goals
2. Terminal objectives
3. Component activities
4. Objects of expenditure

In the Maryland model, the heaviest emphasis is on the cost of the terminal objectives, which should be self-policing; that is, a method should be built in to determine when the terminal objectives have been met. Objects of expenditure (the services or products bought) are also costed thoroughly, as they are in traditional school accounting. Little has been done and tested yet on the costing of component activities and the goals themselves.

Workshop participants toiled through the exercise, assigning schedules, personnel and materials to a number of terminal objectives and coming up with a cost picture.

Comments as they worked away:

"Costing really should be the last step. The important thing is to couple planning with resource requirements. It is only after that process that you can intelligently begin to assess the costs of the resources you need."

"No, costing can't be the last step. What you really have to get to is cost effectiveness."

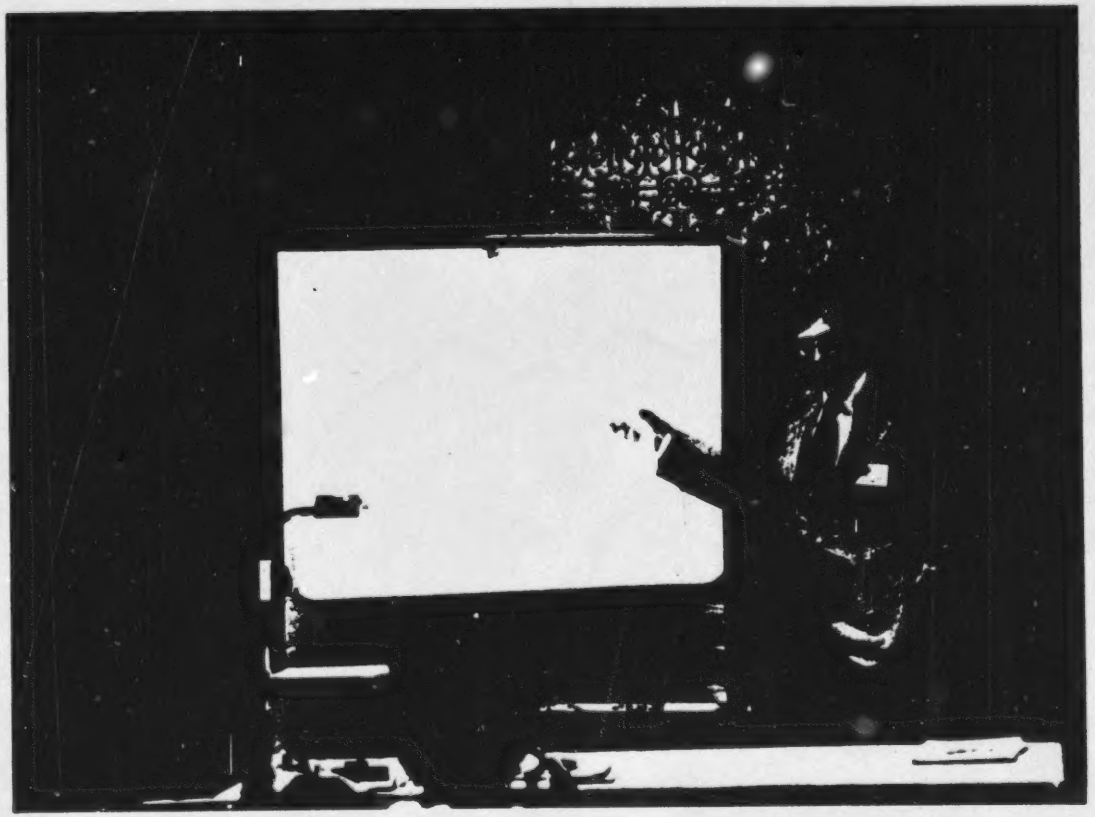
"What do you do about hidden costs? For

instance, your research department works for you as you move toward accountability – do you have to set up a mechanism to count how many hours of whose time goes into this?"

"Or the cost of – well, call it foregone opportunities? For instance, you have a stockpile of norm-referenced tests, and you throw them out because now you're moving to criterion-referenced tests. Isn't that a real cost of your accountability program?"

"It's ludicrous to try to attach costs to everything a teacher does. I can see sense in trying to reach the point where you have some quantifiable measurements that can be aggregated in some fashion and set against some terminal objective. But for most of the day, the teacher doesn't know specifically why she's doing what she's doing or what terminal objective, if any, it's directed to; she's just doing it because it seems to be a good idea and seems to work."

"I grant you this exercise makes it look as if you can capture the costs of an accountability program. That's all right. What we'd better keep in mind, though, is the reason why we're incurring those costs – what accountability is all about."



THEY SAID...

PDQ
(PARABLES, DIVERTISSEMENTS AND QUOTES)
One of the things to keep in mind about accountability, said Dr. Browder, is that different groups not only contribute differently, but suffer differently when things don't work. In the same fashion, he noted, both the chicken and the pig contribute to the farmer's breakfast; but the costs of the contribution are not equal.

ROLES OF PARTICIPANTS

Leader for this workshop was Dr. Carl E. Wilsey, professor of educational administration at the University of Northern Colorado and director of the UNC/La Verne College Doctoral Program in School Management.

Dr. Wilsey is co-author of a CAP publication, "Roles of the Participants in Educational Accountability," which was the base book for the workshops.

The workshop sessions were tightly structured. Following the organization of the publication, they weighed the roles of participants in various functional components of accountability, by the following scheme:

FUNCTIONAL COMPONENTS
- *Select Goals*
- *Determine Objectives*
- *Analyze Alternative Programs and Activities*
- *Develop or Revise Programs and Activities*
- *Develop Program Accounting and Budgeting Procedures*
- *Establish Timetables*
- *Evaluate Achievement of Objectives*
- *Report to the Public*
- *Evaluate System and Revise*

POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS
- *State Legislature/Governor*
- *State Department of Education*
- *State Board of Education*
- *Local School Board*
- *Community Members and Groups (including Parents)*
- *Citizens' Committees*
- *Local School Superintendent*
- *District Administrators and Supervisors*
- *Principals*
- *Teachers*
- *Students*
- *Teacher Organizations*
- *Other School-Related Organizations*
- *Consultants*

TYPE OF PARTICIPATION
- *Advise*
- *Approve, Authorize or Mandate*
- *Provide Consultative or Training Services*
- *Provide Funding*
- *Provide Information or Data*
- *Responsible for Day-to-Day Operation*
- *Recommend*
- *Supervise (or Control, Evaluate, Enforce)*

At each workshop, the participants voted on which role they would play and with which component they would deal. Some random comments, as the groups played their roles:

"Parents and other lay citizens are being given too much responsibility. They simply don't have the competence to deal with these matters."

"Perhaps not. But they have the money and the votes."

"There should be terminal boundaries for each of these roles. Everyman an expert is a lovely ideal, but this is the real world."

"I don't want state departments having that strong a voice in local affairs."

"But the only experts are on the state level – and that's where most of the money is too."

"We should make it compulsory that legislators sit on these accountability committees. They're so damned dreary that the legislators would soon lose their taste for passing accountability laws."

"We're focusing on the rights of the participants. Let's look at the responsibilities too."s

"The question always is, 'Who gets hung if things go wrong?' "

THEY SAID...

PDQ
(PARABLES, DIVERTISSEMENTS AND QUOTES)
120 ashtrays were set out on the tables for the opening Denver meeting. At its conclusion, 14 had been used for ashes and butts, and four for scraps of paper.

At one workshop session, there were two smokers (female) among 14 participants. At another, there was one smoker and one tooth-clencher of an empty pipe among 12 participants.
At another . . . . . .

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

Leaders of this workshop were Dr. John W. Adams, director of the State Educational Assessment, Minnesota Department of Education; Dr. J. Robert Coldiron, educational research associate for the Educational Quality Assessment, Pennsylvania State Department of Education; and Judy Haynes, assessment coordinator for educational accountability, Florida Department of Education.

The workshop was designed to allow participants a general overview of the differing procedures used, followed by small group discussion sessions in which the particular operations of greatest interest to participants could be examined in greater detail.

The presentations focused on three major areas of concern. First, what are the basic objectives of the respective programs: i.e., what information is desired about the progress of which students, and for whom is the information intended? Second, what instruments of assessment are used, how are they selected or developed, and how are they administered and analyzed? Third, how and in what form are results disseminated, how is the information used, and what is its impact on various educational agencies?

The workshop was titled "Looking for a Chameleon," a billing that came to seem increasingly appropriate as the presentations revealed the striking differences in program coloration brought about by the differing backgrounds of each state's assessment goals and procedures.

Thus, strong contrasts were seen even in such a seemingly fundamental matter as what to test for. For example, Florida concentrates on basic skills in reading, writing, and mathematics, whereas Pennsylvania attempts to weigh student development not only in the three R's but also in a wide spectrum of subjective areas, from "understanding others" to "health habits." Minnesota, on the other hand, assesses over a five-year cycle the full range of subjects in the school curriculum, patterning its program after the National Assessment of Educational Progress and, indeed, borrowing liberally from NAEP's objectives and exercises.

Similarly, while Florida is moving to census testing, assessing each and every child at given grade levels, Minnesota has

adopted a random sampling procedure, polling students by age group and reporting on a regional basis rather than by school or district. Pennsylvania, in contrast, assesses by district, with districts participating on a voluntary basis.

Given such variations, and accompanying variations in instruments and reporting techniques, it was perhaps inevitable that group discussion centered less on details of particular programs than on issues of broader concern, notably the role – or lack of one – of local districts in a statewide, state-mandated assessment program. One participant, for example, expressed concern that state objectives, as reflected in test items, would willy-nilly influence local curricula–"by precept," he said, "if not by prescription." Other questions raised included the matter of public release of assessment results, particularly if in a form to permit comparative rankings, and the need for following up assessment with specific assistance in strengthening instructional programs shown to be in need of improvement.

THEY SAID...

PDQ
(PARABLES, DIVERTISSEMENTS AND QUOTES)
Three fundamental laws operate in all school systems that have a focus on accountability, Dr. Lessinger warned:
*Well-known Murphy's Law: Anything that can go wrong will.
*Gusperson's Law: A slice of bread always falls butter side down.
*Fettridge's Law: The juice of a grapefruit being eaten will always find the human eye.

COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

This workshop was a two-man show staged by Dr. Thomas H. Fisher, coordinator of dissemination for the Michigan Department of Education's Educational Assessment Program, and by Dr. Erwin P. Bettinghaus, Chairman of the Department of Communication at Michigan State University.

Dr. Fisher led off with a brief history of the genesis and development of Michigan's accountability and assessment programs, with emphasis on the politically volatile issues of public release of assessment results and the linkage of those results to state funding. This was followed by a frank discussion of the Michigan Department of Education's evolving efforts in disseminating information on its programs and their results, and particularly of the severe communication problems encountered along the way – problems which induced the Department to call in communications experts from Michigan State University to analyze what went wrong, and, eventually, to develop for CAP a dissemination model for educational accountability which would help other states avoid similar pitfalls. similar pitfalls.

Dr. Bettinghaus, who with his colleague Gerald R. Miller designed the dissemination model (discussed in the CAP publication "Keeping the Public Informed: Accent or Accountability"), then took the floor to outline for the workshop participants the general principles underlying an effective accountability communications program.

ELEMENTS OF COMMUNICATION

Dr. Bettinghaus defines these as sources, receivers, channels, and messages – or, who is talking to whom through what medium and what are they saying? Some helpful hints: Don't assume "official" sources of information on accountability (e.g. the state department of education) are the only ones – teachers, legislators, and others talk too . . . . In terms of believability, some sources are more equal than others . . . . Focus communications efforts on those "key publics" whose support counts most . . . . Keep opinion leaders informed – they'll spread their opinions anyway . . . . Face-

to-face communication is most effective in changing attitudes, but other channels may be more effective in conveying information . . . . The news media are most useful in stimulating interest . . . . Making information available is important; channeling its flow is more important . . . . Meanings are in people, not in words.

BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION

Since meanings are in people, most barriers to communication stem from a mismatch between message and receiver, Dr. Bettinghaus pointed out. For example, people prefer new messages to jibe with information and attitudes they already hold, and will strive for this balance – if necessary, by distorting or rejecting outright the intruding message. A series of messages may be needed to bring about consistency between the intended message and its meaning. Similarly, there may be a discrepancy between the organizational network through which messages are framed and the communication network through which they are actually conveyed: A state department of education may assume its high place in the education hierarchy assures its messages will be received, whereas in fact it is the teacher who is the most influential element

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in communicating with the concerned public. Or, messages may go astray because they fail to answer for the people most involved (e.g., the teacher) the all-important question, "What's in it for me?"

BRINGING ABOUT SOCIAL CHANGE

Dr. Bettinghaus likened the process of winning support for accountability programs to the classic – and classically successful – effort to bring about the widespread use of hybrid seed corn . . . . From the floor: "So maybe we need an educational accountability extension system, with a county agent for every school district."

COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES

The principal aim of any communication effort is not to produce and deliver messages but to elicit a response in the receivers – though the nature of the desired response, and therefore of the message, may differ from time to time and hearer to hearer. Messages can be tailored to: increase a particular public's awareness of the accountability program; change (for the better) people's attitudes toward the program; bring about compliance with the program's requirements; enlist support for the program.

EVALUATING COMMUNICATION EFFORTS

Dr. Bettinghaus's advice: Do it. Feedback gathered along the way should be supplemented by a formal effort to judge whether the communication program had the desired effects – and if not, why not.

THEY THOUGHT. . .

Having met and heard and spoken, the participants regathered to discuss what the REACT conferences had been about and what they had achieved.

Dr. Browder, who had opened both conferences at Tampa and at Denver with an overview of accountability, led the closing sessions of critique and summary. In free give-and-take, a number of areas stood out prominently.

NATURE OF THE CONFERENCE

It was widely agreed that the conferences were largely information-giving. People, for the most part, listened and absorbed; many thought they had not much opportunity to inter-act.

Some viewed this as a fault. Others took the position that this was a natural consequence of the purpose of the conference. When people gather to deal with techniques, they pointed out, they must hear about those techniques from those who have invented or utilized them. The logical next step, they said, was to apply those techniques back home – either as they were described, or modified to meet local conditions.

This "local conditions" aspect came up in another vein, with a number of references to the prominence of State educational agencies in the conferences. Again, some said this critically, declaring that the local school is where the action is. And again, others noted it as a logical consequence of the fact that some states have indeed taken the lead in accountability. Agreeing that the local district – more, the local school building – was where most of the action had to be, they described the state-level involvement as the body of experience which should help guide local action.

ACCEPTANCE OF ACCOUNTABILITY

There was wide-scale agreement that a common acceptance of the basic nature of accountability had been achieved. Of course, debate continued on specifics – but there was little voiced opposition to the proposition that accountability meant, at least, defining what was to be accomplished; measuring how well it had been accomplished and what the costs were; and reporting on both.

Statements on this matter made in the closing session included the following:

** The role of parents in drawing up goals remains controversial. On the one hand their participation was described as fundamental; on the other it was described as ill-informed.*

* There was, perhaps, too much emphasis on rights and not enough on responsibilities.

* Equally, there was too much emphasis on the effect accountability might have on the individual in his own role (teacher, parent, whatever) and too little on the global aspects of accountability.

* But – importantly – accountability is essentially negotiable.

* There is danger that becoming expert at measuring how things are now will lock people too long into the "now" process – perhaps closing an avenue to changes that should be made for the future. (In this connection, a participant noted that the children for whom accountability decisions are being made now will become the decision-makers themselves at about the turn of the century; and that the quality of their judgments then will relate directly to the quality of the accountability judgments being made now.)

* There is less tendency now than there was in the beginning to look on legislators as the natural enemy; less tendency – though still a good deal – to look at any interest in costs as a signal of attack on the educational establishment. In the words of one participant: "Accountability is more glamorous to the taxpayer and the legislator than to the educator for just that reason – there is a chance of saving money, or of spending it more wisely. Perhaps if the educator worried more about getting more for the money, the taxpayer would worry less."

* Participants were impressed with a central theme of one workshop: The meaning is in people, not in words.

SUMMARY COMMENTS

Several truncated closing comments that tried to capsulize the conferences:

* Where funds flow, things happen.

* Accountability is here to stay.

* Techniques have been developed; they await perfecting.

* When accountability reaches the local school building, education has a chance of becoming exciting.

* The conference added to participants' individual sense of growth and development. Like any learning experience, the growth can slip away unless soon sorted out and put into action. The key question is this: What will I do differently now?